Information for Social Change

Information for Social Change Number 37

Summer/Autumn 2018

Issue Editors:
Dr Paul Catherall and Martyn Lowe

Information for Social Change is an activist collective that examines issues of censorship, freedom and ethics amongst library and information workers. It is committed to promoting alternatives to the dominant paradigms of library and information work and publishes its own journal, *Information for Social Change*.

http://www.libr.org/isc

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The ways by which information is controlled and mediated has a serious influence on the ways people think, how they communicate, what they believe is the "real world", what the limits of the permissible are. This applies equally to information that comes through the channels of the mass media, through our bookshops or through our libraries. But we want to go further than that, documenting also the alternatives to this control, the radical and progressive channels by which truly unfettered, unmediated ideas may circulate. And further still: to encourage information workers to come together, to share ideas, to foster these alternatives – whether we are publishers, librarians, booksellers, communication workers or distributors. Whoever you are, if you are in sympathy with us, join us.

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Information for Social Change Number 37 Summer/Autumn 2018

Principal Contributors

Fred Stoss is a member of SRRT (Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association), is Librarian for Biological, Environmental Sciences and Mathematics at University of Buffalo, he is an environmental campaigner known for his work with Al Gore and other US statesman for raising the profile of climate change and for his decades of research work in toxicology, environmental health and sustainability, see:
https://www.buffalo.edu/ubnow/spotlight.host.html/content/shared/university/news/ub-reporter-articles/stories/2013/profile_stoss.detail.html

Martyn Lowe is a member of the Information for Social Change Editorial Board and has been a founder/ involved in a wide range of pacifist and library activist movements since the 1970s. You can read more about Martyn on his ISC profile http://libr.org/isc/profile.html or his blog http://www.theproject.me.uk/

Dr Paul Catherall is a member of the Information for Social Change Editorial Board and is a Librarian working in the Higher Education sector, he has been involved with Information for Social Change, Career Development Group Wales and various progressive blogs for several years, Paul has been an active trade unionist with UNISON and UCU. You can read more about Paul on his ISC profile http://libr.org/isc/profile.html

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Issue Editors

Dr Paul Catherall and Martyn Lowe

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Introduction

Dr Paul Catherall

This issue of Information for Social Change is provided in a climate of division and uncertainty for Europe and in the context of ongoing international conflict. The BBC Question Time episode enclosed reflects current debate on Europe and its relationship to the UK, also reflecting developments for UK infrastructure in an ongoing period of liberalisation and retrenchment for public services such as education, libraries and transport. This issue also provides critical commentary on educational topics such as E-Learning and Information Literacies, reflecting the emergent role of globalisation, digitisation and private equity.

The issue also reflects on the current state of progressive or radical library, information and allied activism with an obituary to Niki Hamman, an Austrian activist prominent within KRIBIBI (Working Group of Critical Librarians in Austria) and commentary on Al Kagan's 'Progressive Library Update' – outlining the current status of progressive Library groups internationally.

The important current debate on climate change is reflected in Fred Stoss' review of a recent field manual on climate activism.

ISC has always provided conversational writing - a number of conversational and commentary pieces are provided on topics such as everyday record keeping and reflections on personal experiences in maintaining involvement in activist groups post-retirement.

We hope you enjoy this issue of ISC and consider contributing to our blog, journal and collective personally.

http://libr.org.isc

Information for Social Change Number 37 Summer/Autumn 2018

The CILIP Trustee Board Elections 2019, My Candidacy for Election

Shirley Yearwood-Jackman

Shirley Yearwood-Jackman

I work as a Librarian (Liaison Librarian for Life Sciences, Psychology) at University of Liverpool and am currently standing as a candidate for the 2019 CLIP Trustee Board election.

During over thirty years as a librarian, I have been advocating for the profession and for the value of libraries on behalf of the public. As President of the Association of Caribbean, University Research and Institutional Libraries (ACURIL) and General Councillor of COMLA, I have showcased their value to the public and provided professional development opportunities for library staff. Since 2015, I have served as a governor of a sixth form college and on the Standards and Quality

Committee, becoming Vice Chair in 2016. Being a governor, has made me aware of the responsibility of a trustee.

I recently represented the profession by delivering papers at LILAC 2017, HLG 2018 and CILIP 2018. Within my own organisation, I am currently a member of my institution's Equality Forum, Professional Services, Athena Swan Committee and BAME Network. Also, I participated in the CILIP Ethics Forum.

I would like to be on the CILIP Board because I believe that library associations can improve people's lives and enhance the careers of professionals. I've always believed that being part of the solution is the best way to enhance and improve our profession and therefore I'm keen to step up and play my part. I believe that austerity has dealt a bitter blow to libraries which has resulted in significantly reduced funding and professional staff, especially in public libraries.

My view is that we all have to stand shoulder to shoulder as a profession, irrespective of which sector we work in, to make the case for libraries and indeed librarians. Otherwise, libraries in all sectors are potentially at risk and the public will see a service become even more under-resourced. Libraries provide an opportunity for everyone to obtain access to information and increasingly, they are critical as safe spaces and leisure spaces for the most vulnerable in our society. I want to be at the heart of making sure that libraries continue to support social justice and equalities both for the public and the profession.

Voting opens on 16 October until 19 October, 2018. Only CILIP members are eligible to vote.

Shirley Yearwood Jackman

Information for Social Change Number 37 Summer/Autumn 2018

Climate Justice Field Manual: A Field Manual to Increase Climate Activism 2017, Jill Macintyre Witt - a review

Fred Stoss

First and foremost, before continuing, there is a disclaimer I must make—my personal connection to this book and its author. I am mentioned in the acknowledgements for having helped in the research for this book, and that both Jill Macintyre Witt and I are trained (by Al Gore) to give his climate change slide presentations and we both have served as Mentors for his non-profit's Climate Reality Project's Climate Reality Leadership Corps, and in that capacity have helped others at Mr. Gore's International Training Workshops.

The 21st Conference of Parties (COP), known as the Paris Climate Summit in November-December 2015 saw nearly 200 governments agree to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions (the United States is now the only country to have pulled out of this agreement). Each nation and a growing number of U.S. States and Cities are left up to their own devices to lower their carbon emissions. National governments may propose and perhaps partially fund the programs attempting to achieve carbon reductions, but it will be much smaller geographic units that implement them.

This field guide focuses on how to increase climate activism through a compilation of strategies and best practices; the field guide informs individuals and organizations on ways to move people to climate activism

and engage in meaningful ways to lower carbon emissions and provides additional insights to help build the climate justice movement. Witt used her capstone project for her Master's Degree in Environmental Studies at Huxley College of the Environment at Western Washington University to formulate this "climate justice field manual", also as a guideline for designing, developing, and implementing effective programs for dedicated and cogent climate change activism by infusing "social movement-building strategies, effective climate communication tips, and detailed accounts of incorporating climate justice into the ways we address the climate crisis."

This self-published book is incredibly well designed, comprising five major sections: What is Climate Justice? Social Movement Building, Effective Climate Communication, Climate Activist Survey, and Climate Justice Building. The book is lavished with a fresh and inviting typography and layout, adorned with richly colored and poignant photographs, and carefully compiled inventories of resources that will assist readers in all aspects of climate activism.

There are two types of library that will find this book useful. First are public libraries that serve as the information gateway for the individual and organizations that will carry out the necessary climate justice programs, projects, and activities. The second group are represented by academic libraries, where students are champing at the bit to engage in various outreach programs within the communities of their campuses, as well as the communities in which their campuses reside. The availability of the book as a free download (see below) provides an outstanding opportunity for ANYONE engaged or thinking of engaging in meaningful climate justice action or campaigning. Activists now have no excuse for being able to obtain directions for accomplishing their goals.

Climate Justice Field Manual: A Field Manual to Increase Climate Activism
2017, Jill Macintyre Witt. Bellingham, WA: *WWU Graduate School Collection*. 579. https://cedar.wwu.edu/wwuet/579 ISBN: 9781387037094. 246 p., Available from Jill Macintyre Witt, via Lulu. $26.16, see -
http://www.lulu.com/us/en/shop/jill-macintyre-witt/climate-justice-field-manual/paperback/product-23235555.html

Information for Social Change Number 37 Summer/Autumn 2018

From information provider, to information user, and back to information provider again

Martyn Lowe

By way of Background.

I never wanted to be an expert or specialist in any subject, but just a good all-rounder who could converse about anything.
[Though the exception to this is what's on television or the world of celebs.]
Thus spending my life in libraries and as an information worker was an ideal job option for me.
I thought that when I retired that it would mean spending my time engaged in self education, while helping out those campaigns which I support.

Why things changed.

Then at the very moment of my retirement three things happened, which changed what I have been doing ever since then.
The first of these was nukiller new build.
The second was the ongoing disaster at Fukushima,
&
The third one was spycops.

Thus I now spend my days both researching information, writing up information, and as a campaigning activist.

How things changed.

The Nukiller Power Issue.

The campaign to stop new build is one which I had been working on for a while, and which continues to raise very great concerns.
As things stand there are currently proposals to build new reactors as Bradwell, Hinkley, Moorside, and Sizewell.
You can read more about them via the no2nuclear websites.

The ongoing disaster at Fukushima is something which has been campaigned against by both Kick Nuclear [KN] and Japanese Against nuclear, which has been holding weekly pickets out-side of the Japanese Embassy in London since the august of 2012. I was on them for the first 10 months before moving further north. Though I still attend KN & JAN Fukushima commemoration events each March.
For more information on KN see: -
https://kicknuclear.com/

How things changed.

Spycops.

It was a few months after my retirement that it was told to me that someone whom I thought has been a friend of mine was in fact a spycop. His name is Bob Lambert, but when I knew him he want under the name of Bob Robinson.
In consequence of which at the end of 2011 I was part of a group of activists which outed him at a public meeting.

We now know that Bob was a member of the SDS [Special Demonstration Squad], which under its different names has comprised some 170 spycops which infiltrated circa 1,000 groups, organisations, and political parties. What these members of the SDS got up to has become a major scandal. For example by entering into sexual liaisons with the women they were spying against, which in turn has resulted in a number of court cases against the Met.

You can find out more about this in the Police Spies Out of Our Lives website https://policespiesoutoflives.org.uk/

I am now what is known as a Core Participant within the Public Inquiry into undercover policing.

[Though the inquiry itself has now become very controversial as a result of the way in which it is being conducted].

Finding out more about all the spycops.

The SDS was set up in 1968.

It was at the end of that year that I also became involved in pacifist activities, and thus became a campaigning activist.

Many of the people I know, knew, or have meet over the years, have also been subjected to spycop activities.

Right now we only know the cover names of a very few of these spycops, and what we do know has been because of the co-operation of a lot of activists.

There is a lot of information about them which can be found on the Undercover Research Group websites http://undercoverresearch.net/

The other group which has been doing a lot of work on this issue is the campaign opposing police surveillance [COPS]

http://campaignopposingpolicesurveillance.com/

I am working upon the spycop issue with both or these groups as part of

a larger network of individuals who have been effected by spycop activities.

The Public inquiry could well last until 2022 or 2023.

Although it looks like we will not get all of the answers we need about spycop activities from what is being examined by this High Count inquiry.

Continuing Research.

Many of the issues which I am concerned about are not ones which are covered in books, but it is possible to find out about then via spending a lot of time reading various periodicals looking a various web pages.

For example: -

A lot of my knowledge about the nukiller waste train issue, and DRS [Direst Rail Services] which operate them, comes from watching lots of YouTube clips and reading the Railway Magazine, that's information which has been gathered by and for train-spotters.

While the rest of the newspapers and periodicals include Construction News, Financial Times, Guardian, Investors Chronicle, New Scientist, Private Eye and The Times.

[All of which means I get some regular exercise by strolling over to my local library, where at a glance I can tell which just which tasks the staff are currently engaged upon.]

That's aside from all of the online newsletters & bulletins which I read online.

For example: -

No2Nuclear http://www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk/

Continuing publishing – Continuing campaigning.

It may seem strange to many library information workers, but there are very large knowledge gaps about many aspects of the nukiller power

industry.

For example there are no books about what goes on at the nukiller enrichment plant at Capenhurst, or the workings of many aspects of the nukiller industry in Cumbria and the North West.

Such research which has been done has been published on the following websites:-

Close Capenhurst http://close-capenhurst.org.uk/

   RADIATION FREE LAKELAND https://mariannewildart.wordpress.com/

Thus my life is a constant round of research and information provision, followed by a lot of active campaigning.

So much for a quiet retirement!

Martyn Lowe

May 16th 2018

Information for Social Change Number 37 Summer/Autumn 2018

Notes and Observations.

Or

A few observations on everyday record keeping, information sharing, and so forth

Martyn Lowe

There are increasingly a number of aspects of life which I observe, and wonder just how people manage to deal with them so badly.

1. Fiscal Records.

Bad Practice.

The first of these is how many people don't take or keep their receipts while using either credit or debit cards.

Thus they have no idea of just how much money they might have to spend that month.

The end result is that they get themselves in to a lot of debt.

Good Practice.

The solution to this is always keep one's receipts and check them against

one's online account statements on a regular basis.

Though I also keep a running total of what's in my account, which is added or subtracted to as I go along. This is kept with a more accurate total which is minus all standing orders & bills to pay until the next payment[s] into my account.

2. Looking after the Manual files.

One of the most difficult things which many people find to do is keeping their financial and legal document files in any sort of order.

While many people do keep these documents, there are a lot of them which are just dumped in to piles on the table, shoved in their drawers, or kept in a box of papers any place they might have room to do so.

Yet all that needs to be done, is to put them in subject order, by date, and file them away with other key documents.

While many people think that doing so is one of the most difficult tasks they can ever manage to achieve.

This really is not so.

Doing so is one of my key skills.

That's why I have spent many happy hours over the years sorting out the filling systems for my various friends.

It is also something which I enjoy doing.

3. CVs like Press Releases.

A good CV is like a press release.

That's because the average time it takes to scan them is less than a minute.

Anyone we has ever read, or had to deal with a lot of them on a regular basis, will tell you exactly the same.

That's why the real trick is to provide the basic information as fast as possible, so that they want to read more.

The Trick.

There are many books about how to pen a good CV, and many so called 'experts' who are making a good living teaching people how to write them.

Yet many people still think to produce one CV which has everything they think a prospective employer might find of use.

Though the best option is to have a brief version, which just lists the basic info, and then a more descriptive one which goes with it.

Best said or not mentioned.

What needs to be included in a good CV is as follows: -

- The job title, but not a job description.

Such descriptions take away the reader's attention from the main points

which they should be focusing upon.

And

- Which town or city one was working at, rather than the full postal address.

Even then it should be remembered that the reader might not know the location.

So rather than a writing Paradise,
or
No names land,

You should list them as:-
Paradise, Gloucestershire. *1
or
Nomansland, Devon *2

Though the best thing which might be considered is adding a web link to where you might have been working in the past.

Then all the information a perspective employer might need is just a click away.

One last consideration is your contact details.

You don't need to put you full address or land line number on any CV when you don't know who will be reading it.

Only include your mobile number & email address on the shorter CV,

Then it can be used to apply for jobs online or on speck, without all the dangers which come from not knowing who might be reading your initial job application approach.

Also see:

https://www.francisfrith.com/uk/paradise

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nomansland%2C_Devon

Information for Social Change Number 37 Summer/Autumn 2018

Comment on Al Kagan's Progressive Library

Update 2013-17

Dr Paul Catherall

The 'Progressive Library Organizations Update, 2013–2017' by Al Kagan outlines the current status of Library and Information groups, journals and related bodies in the arena of progressive or radical libraries, this is an addendum to Kagan's book 'Progressive Library Organizations: A Worldwide History'.

The update includes coverage of the Swedish 'Bibliotek i Samhälle' (BiS) [Libraries in Society] - outlining their work with the Gothenburg Book and Library Fair and international solidarity projects with Palestine and Western Sahara.

The update also describes recent developments of the German 'AK Kritische Bibliothek' (KB) [Working Group Critical Library] - including coverage of their work with the Berlin Working Group on District Libraries, their work with the German-Speaking Network of Women/Lesbian Libraries and Archives and their documentation of the East German women's movement.

Kagan also outlines developments for the Austrian 'Arbeitskreis kritischer Bibliothekarinnen und Bibliothekare' (KRIBIBI) [Working Group of Critical Librarians] – outlining their advocacy on an official government policy for libraries, their work on the needs of students in writing their pre-academic essays and work to reform library education.

Information for Social Change (ISC) is also described in terms of a journal and blog, commenting on challenges ISC has faced in maintaining active contributions, Kagan concludes that ISC continues to offer important work in the area of progressive librarianship.

Other organisations featured include the United States, Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association (SRRT) and the Progressive Librarians Guild (PLG).

In summary, the paper provides a valuable overview of progressive and radical Library groups and publications internationally, with Kagan having undertaken considerable effort to liaise with groups via non-English media such as discussion boards, email and interviews, this is an important publication for the progressive library community and provides a useful addendum to Kagan's substantive publication.

See –

https://journal.radicallibrarianship.org/index.php/journal/article/view/27

Information for Social Change Number 37 Summer/Autumn 2018

Comment on Anneliese Dodds Speaking on Question Time, 24/05/18

Dr Paul Catherall

This Question Time episode features a previous contributor to ISC, Anneliese Dodds, Labour MP, Shadow Treasury Minster and former MEP.

The episode was presented by David Dimbleby in Worthing. The panel included Conservative MP Anna Soubry MP, Daily Mail and Sunday Times columnist and former editor of the Sunday Telegraph, Dominic Lawson, Professor Sarah Churchwell and the novelist Lionel Shriver. The episode included coverage of the UK Brexit debate and current UK government divisions, issues for access, cost and equalities for Higher Education, issues of nationalisation and the UK rail debate and UK taxation levels.

In response to questions on the Brexit negotiations, Anneliese commented on the failure of UK Government to respond on six original tests for a successful Brexit agreement, suggesting that economic, regulatory and social benefits available to UK business and citizens would not be preserved in the current climate of current failing Brexit negotiations and the prospect of no replacement EU-UK deal.

Anneliese commented on the very limited scope of the current UK negotiation team, for instance - lacking coverage on environmental issues and the apparent use of EU residents as 'bargaining chips' during the

discussions, suggesting difficulties would inevitably ensue from these kind of negotiations. Anneliese queried the suggested correlation between falling UK wages and freedom of movement, suggesting an inevitable wider impact on the UK economy as a consequence of the removal of free movement for both UK and EU citizens.

Contributions by Anneliese also included difficulties for access to Higher Education, including ongoing lack of access to top universities for applicants based in the north of England and the lack of wider access at elite universities such as University of Oxford; this point was supported from the audience, indicating the overwhelming dominance of SE England applicants attending Oxford.

Anneliese contributed to discussion on the cost of education for Part-Time students, indicating the UK is now heading backwards in relation to social mobility, with resulting greater levels of disadvantage and inequalities.

Further comments included discussion on nationalisation of core UK service industries, citing the urgent need to remove the profit motive and for greater investment for core services, with particular focus on the problematic UK rail service. Anneliese confirmed current Labour policy (and public support) for nationalisation of rail services.

Anneliese also outlined Labour policy to increase tax levels for the most wealthy to increase NHS funding by 5%, indicating that current levels of taxation are unfair as this disproportionately impacts individuals at the lower end of the wage spectrum and advantages the most wealthy.

See the episode on BBC IPlayer (limited to UK viewers): https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b0b4fznw/question-time-2018-24052018

About Anneliese Dodds MP –

MP for Oxford East in 2017 in the snap election.

Former MEP for the South East Region in 2014.

July 2017 appointed as Shadow Treasury Minister.

May 2017 appointed Senior Lecturer in Public Policy at Aston University, Birmingham.

For coverage of a conference at University of Swansea in 2005, with ISC contributors including Anneliese Dodds, Ruth Rikowski and Paul Catherall see:

http://libr.org/isc/ruth-rikowski-and-anneliese-dodds-at-globalisation-libraries-information-and-education-a-career-development-group-wales-event-swansea-university-021205

Information for Social Change Number 37 Summer/Autumn 2018

Critical Perspectives on E-Learning an Update

Dr Paul Catherall

The following is based on an excerpt within my PhD thesis, entitled 'Student Perceptions on Skills and Learning Challenges in the Use of Educational Technology in a Low-Contact, Blended and Professional Learning Context: A Grounded Theory of 'Improvised Learning' (MMU, 2017), exploring critical perspectives on the prevalent forms, technologies and approaches for E-Learning in the UK education (particularly Higher Education) sectors in the UK.

The implementation of 'E-Learning' as a strategic imperative can be observed in the context of UK government advocacy for digital literacy, reflecting a demand-led role for Higher Education and emergent lifelong or flexible learning for an increasingly dynamic employment market (Kruss and Petersen, 2016). Advocacy within the UK to implement technology-enhanced learning to facilitate lifelong learning and support industrial, technical and economic development has been a key characteristic of recent UK governments (Tomlinson, 2015).
Catherall (2006) commented on the impact of government policy prior to the early 2000s, indicating that "post-statutory UK education sectors have seen dramatic change in policy and focus… …a combination of widening access to post-statutory education and training and use of emerging technologies to achieve these aims."

Key government reports were a characteristic of post 1997 government advocacy, defining national policy for the expansion of Further and Higher Education to facilitate training and professional development across society: "Reports such as the Dearing Report (1997), The Learning Age (1998) and 21st Century Skills Realising Our Potential (2003) presented both industry and the education sectors with a number of goals focused on improving educational standards as a vehicle to strengthen the UK economy." (Catherall, 2006, p.153).

Cullen (2001, p.314) however questioned government emphases on the use of ICT as a driver for post-statutory education, questioning the likely expansion of academic delivery via learning technologies for some demographic groups and some business sectors, commenting "Where people in business or professional occupations acquire skills as part of their employment, manual workers and the unemployed are less likely to be exposed to such opportunities..."

The universality of networked access may also be questioned when considering recent government advocacy for ICT uptake and ICT investment within Higher Education (Pucciarelli and Kaplan 2016). This situation remains particularly true for elderly students and school leavers where class-based education remains the primary mode of educational delivery. This is often described as the "digital divide" (Cullen, 2001, p.312).

It is perhaps notable that an additional trend for global access to learning technologies is now characterised by increased Internet Control and surveillance for some world regions (Alexander et al., 2017; Torres, 2017). Internet Control can reflect the use of wide-scale proxies (controlling access via an intermediary service), local Internet Service Provider (ISP) practices or other measures to monitor, control or obstruct secure Internet technologies such as SSL (Secure Socket Layer) and

related technologies. Catherall (2015, p.34) comments on difficulties for some users experiencing connectivity issues in an online or remote educational context via learning technologies, problems can include "...obstructions caused inadvertently, such as the use of common TCP/IP and other protocol related Port numbers assigned... ...or deliberate blocking factors such as configuration to prevent certain protocols, encryption or services running...", the author further comments on the impact of increased Internet Control in some world regions, in context to distance and remote learning via the VLE and related technologies, suggesting the increasing issue this can present for learning technologies and remote access for students who may be residing partially or permanently in an affected location, further commenting that "Given international trends toward increasing WWW restrictions or limitations on personal freedoms experienced in many parts of the world, and corresponding reliance on the WWW and social media such as Twitter and blogging for popular expression, the above tools have become a lifeline for many users in affected regions." The increasing prevalence of Internet control in many world regions over recent years is also a significant factor for the delivery of distance based education via technology for students residing/studying in affected regions, posing challenges for educational providers and technical teams for the delivery of systems which can function in a dynamic and uncertain climate for network systems compatibility and functional integrity, in an environment where regional Internet regulations can change rapidly, sometimes without warning or formal notice.

The expansion of overseas online learning remained an ongoing trend since the early 2000s. Aung and Khaing (2015) point out the "huge potential" of economic and social impact for online learning in developing nations, however "...poorly equipped classrooms and lack of electricity have hindered the deployment and subsequent adoption of e-learning especially in rural areas." Torres (2017, p.8-9) comments that "in African

countries only 20% of its inhabitants have access to the internet." Bagchi et al. (2015) contrasts differing connectivity across world regions, commenting that "use per 100 residents in the Netherlands was 93.96 in 2013 compared to 36.9 in Paraguay and 3.5 in Central African Republic in the same year..." (Bagchi et al. 2015). Internet Control is indicated as problematic for some regions, impacting search engines and social media, obstruction of Web security/privacy and criminalisation, resulting in barriers for regions such as China, with "more than 721 million Internet users" (Torres, 2017, p.8). Aung and Khaing (2015, p.409) comment on difficulties for some students accessing English medium provision, suggesting their review "...found that most of the respondents felt language was a barrier to e- learning." Torres (2017, p.8) similarly comments that "the Indian electronic market operates in different languages and multiple infrastructure problems generate a high internal digital divide." Poushter (2016, p.6) comments on gender equality issues, stating that in developing nations "...men are more likely than women to use the internet..." Developing regions do however experience high use of social media and connectivity of mobile devices such as smartphones, "climbing from a median of 21% in 2013 to 37% in 2015." (Poushter, 2016, p.5).

In addition to questions on universal access, the deployment of educational technologies is also inherently reliant upon prevalence and compliance with a variety of standards, allowing for development of Web sites, data-driven applications and interactive content for use across a range of Web browsers and devices. Challenges for the implementation of standards for learning technologies include disparities between Web site HTML/ XHTML scripting, programmatic Web content and Web browsers. Mesbah and Prasad (2011, p.2) comment on the ongoing challenges following the shift toward interactive and dynamic applications represented by Web 2.0 and differing levels of compatibility between Web content and client-side Web browsers, commenting that "...the explosive

growth in the number of browsers and client-side environments has only exacerbated this issue…"

One emergent area of concern for standards development comprises the development of the SCORM specifications for learning objects, allowing for development, sharing and re-use of packaged learning materials for use in compatible platforms (Burgos, 2015; Day and Erturk 2017). Singh and Reed (2002) also questioned the emergent nature of learning object specifications and suggest educators should query the status of SCORM compliance when evaluating commercial learning platforms (Singh and Reed, 2002, p.65).

Friesen (2003, p.59) comments on the close relationship between technology facilitated learning and a linear and passive instructional design model, suggesting an inevitable outcome focused on systemisation and the maximisation of efficiencies for labour and productivity: "The end result of this approach is to understand training and the technologies that support it as a means of 'engineering' and maximizing the performance of the human components of a larger system.." Similarly, Musa (2003, p1.), Dobbs (2000, p.84) and Fetherston (2001) commented on a lack of attention to educational processes or theories of learning and teaching when evaluating, designing or deploying learning facilitated technology. Fetherston (2001, p.25) summarised "pedagogical challenges" in the context of Web based learning, drawn from a substantive review of literature surrounding E-Learning; these summaries can be seen to encompass several key fields for practical implementation of technology facilitated learning, including experiential learning, critical reflection on learning and collaborative or participatory learning in contrast to transmissive approaches to courseware delivery.

One final question for deployment of educational technology posed often in the late 1990s, but still largely unresolved by the mid 2000s concerns the potential and growing role of non-traditional educational providers,

technology-focused corporations such as Microsoft and other sources of private equity or external stakeholders for the delivery of Higher Education via technology (Noble, 1997; Cullen, 2001; Friesen, 2003). This debate was closely aligned with questions or potential concerns for the systemisation of learning and loss of traditional pedagogic, social and cultural experiences inherent in class based learning. These concerns were queried by David Noble (1997), questioning the uptake of systemised learning - to the detriment of traditional class based collegiate and experiential learning as a "headlong rush to implement new technology with so little regard for deliberation of the pedagogical and economic costs and at the risk of student and faculty". For Noble, this trend is linked directly to issues of automation, including the displacement of educators and potential for rapid commercialisation of learning, commenting that "...beneath that change, and camouflaged by it, lies another: the commercialization of higher education. For here as elsewhere technology is but a vehicle and a disarming disguise." (Noble, 1997, p.107).

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A Review of the New Media Centres (NMC) Reports on Emerging Technologies and Educational Challenges

Dr Paul Catherall

The following is based on content within my PhD thesis, entitled 'Student Perceptions on Skills and Learning Challenges in the Use of Educational Technology in a Low-Contact, Blended and Professional Learning Context: A Grounded Theory of 'Improvised Learning' (MMU, 2017), exploring some recent developments for the Higher Education sector, particularly focused around recent trends for innovation and learning technologies.

The NMC organisation (New Media Centres), an independent research body has produced a number of reports under its 'Horizon Project' in collaboration with EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (ELI), researching "trends, challenges, and technology developments likely to have an impact on teaching, learning" across educational sectors, including the Higher Education and HEI Library sectors. The research comprises qualitative studies across educational institutions in 195 countries (NMC, 2018). The NMC Higher Education focused 'Horizon' report (2017) was composed of a "78 experts" sourced internationally within the Higher Education sector, the report was focused around the question "Which trends and technology developments will drive educational change?" (NMC, 2017). The report outlines "six key trends, six significant challenges, and six developments in educational technology".

Key long-term impact trends are discussed seen as drivers for "Accelerating Technology Adoption". The key trend, "Redesigning Learning Spaces" is focused around physical and digital innovation to accommodate scope for learning via informal spaces, design for collaborative learning and integration of learning technologies to facilitate individual or collaborative learning, commenting that these can "incorporate features such as movable furniture, adjustable control of display screens, WiFi, and multiple outlets"; wider, off-campus and conferencing is also cited in terms of adaptive learning spaces and facilities for online, overseas and other off-campus users, suggesting that "telepresence technologies are allowing geographically dispersed students and professors to more flexibly meet and work together." (NMC, 2017, p.16).

The key trend of "Collaborative Learning" discusses student group-working as a "social construct" which places the student "at the center, emphasizing interaction, working in groups" and for "Deeper learning" approaches which allow for critical, reflective and other advanced learning processes (NMC, 2017, p.20).

The NMC report also outlined several "significant challenges" in context to technology adoption in the sector, these are potential impediments to development of skills or literacies but also present potential opportunities for Higher Education (NMC, 2017, p.20).

The challenge of "Blending Formal and Informal Learning" cites a range of skills challenges for effective of blended learning approaches, including issues for integrating the formal and informal learning spaces and challenges for section of credible online learning materials. The emergence of informal learning via educational technologies and growing integration between commercial providers for online learning (such as Coursera) is presented, suggesting the need to understand students'

experiences beyond the institutional setting, in an environment where blended learning technologies such as Learning Management Systems are increasingly ubiquitous and integrated with social media and professional networks such as LinkedIn (NMC, 2017, p.22).

The challenge of "Improving Digital Literacy" is also raised in the report, suggesting disparities between students' prior knowledge of digital media, mobile devices and social media in contrast to studying via use of educational technologies in a formal educational context. The JISC "digital capability framework" is cited as a means of developing digital literacies for self-reflection and critical skill, similarly, activities developed at Western Sydney University are outlined for developing "high-order thinking skills". (NMC, 2017, p.24).

Further "Important Developments in Educational Technology" are cited in relation to the Higher Education sector, including the emergence of "Adaptive Learning Technologies" - suggesting success of adaptive learning initiatives such as the "Adaptive Learning Market Acceleration (ALMAP)" initiative, a multi-institution project to promote adaptive learning behaviours within Learning Management systems and US Higher Education consortia APLU "(Accelerating Adoption of Adaptive Courseware initiative)", initiatives which identified improved student performance and outcomes when studying via adaptive learning technologies (NMC, 2017, p.38).

Further challenges described include the "The Internet of Things" – querying the potential for wider integration of online and domestic devices and equipment and "Natural User Interfaces" (or NUIs) for integration of sensor-based "swiping" and "touching" technologies - also referred to as "haptic technology", citing research at University of Sussex to develop learning technologies relying on "ultrasound waves through the back of the hand to a screen display on the palm…" (NMC, 2017, p.48).

The report summarises key insight or perspectives on learning trends such as the requirement for "cultural transformation" and for the requirement of "Real-world skills" to facilitate employability and relevance to "workplace development". The use of collaboration is cited frequently in the report, suggesting the importance of collaborative approaches to ensure "Communities of practice, multidisciplinary leadership groups, and open social networks".

The disparity between students' prior or informal competencies is contrasted with the requirement for improving digital literacies, suggesting that "…fluency in the digital realm is more than just understanding how to use technology". The impact of new technologies is presented as "foregone conclusions", suggesting that the development and survival of Higher Education organisations depends on engagement with "these now pervasive approaches". The report also suggests the need for ongoing engagement in "Lifelong Learning" to facilitate formal and informal learning for wider societal careers development, an objective for development of "faculty, staff, and students." (NMC, 2017, pp.2-3)

The IET (Institute of Educational Technology) is a European-based research organisation focused around leadership in Higher Education, learner analytics and projections of future trends for learning technologies in the HE sector, IET operates as an institute within the Open University, The IET 'Innovating Pedagogy' report is a series of annual reports exploring "new forms of teaching, learning and assessment for an interactive world, to guide teachers and policy makers in productive innovation" (IET, 2018). The IET 'Innovating Pedagogy' report (2017) explores ten innovations related to the Higher Education sector; the report was compiled by the IET in collaboration with researchers at the "Learning In a Networked Society (LINKS) Israeli Center of Research Excellence (I-CORE)".

The development of "Open textbooks" is also outlined, comprising open, "freely shareable and editable resources" which can be modified by students and educators, used within specific learning contexts or 'remixed' for use alongside other educational resources. This kind of resource is cited as a form of "OER" (Open Educational Resource) and is suggested as a teaching method for discussing open licenses (such as Creative Commons) and related democratic information sharing, news reporting and content development, suggesting that "Open textbooks can be used to challenge the relationship between students and knowledge." (IET, 2017, p.4).   Similarly, another development comprises "Navigating post-truth societies", suggesting the importance of critical and reflective skills for interpreting a range of media sources in a climate of proliferation of Web-based resources and potential difficulties for issues of authority and bias, suggesting that development of critical and evaluative skills can promote "…understanding of the nature of knowledge and justification as well as fostering abilities to assess the validity of claims and form sound arguments. " (IET, 2017, p.4)

Another development cited includes "Intergroup empathy", suggesting the need for diverse student groups or demographics to engage in a shared online community to develop mutual understanding and overcome extant historic, cultural, stereotypical or prejudicial barriers, commenting that "...when groups are kept apart, they are likely to develop negative stereotypes of each other." These skills are suggested as necessary for an increasingly connected, shared experience for students engaged in digital technologies and online or remote models of learning (IET, 2017, p.4).

In a further development or perspective, "Immersive learning" is cited as a potential trend, characterised by interaction beyond textual, in-person or digital forms of learning via senses such as "...vision, sound, movement, spatial awareness...", this development is cited in terms of integration between learning activities and Virtual Reality technologies

such as "…3D screens or handheld devices" commenting that "learners can experience immersive learning in a classroom, at home, or outdoors..." (IET, 2017, p.4)

The development of "Student-led analytics" is also cited, suggesting that students will lead in defining goals and influencing their own metrics in contrast to traditional institutional student metrics derived from enterprise/institutional systems such as the Virtual Learning Environment. In this model, students generate data during learning experiences or tasks, allowing for shared analysis of data, suggesting that student metrics "…not only invite students to reflect on the feedback they receive but also start them on the path of setting their own learning goals." (IET, 2017, p.4)

Another development, "Big-data inquiry: thinking with data" is cited as an emerging trend in terms of open access to statistical data and student engagement with data via learning technologies and Web based sources, allowing for open, democratic forms of data use and analysis. The report further comments that a new skillset or competency will be required for interpretation of data and visualisations, also suggesting that students will need to demonstrate they are "data literate" (IET, 2017, p.5).

In another development, "Learning with internal values", the report suggests that educational providers will be required to consider the innate or personal values of students in contrast to values presented by institutions and 'curricula', suggesting that the recognition of these values and integration of personal values within learning activities will benefit learning processes, commenting that this approach "… balances the learning based on students' internal values with the learning that is required by the normative values of educational systems." (IET, 2017, p.5)

In a further development, "Humanistic knowledge-building communities" the report comments on the need to recognise the role of societal impact on learning and of personal experience, suggesting these factors can enhance learning by integrating practices which are "highly creative, and self-directed", this perspective is also referred to as Humanistic Knowledge-building Communities ("HKBCs"), suggesting that students "who participate in HKBCs develop their knowledge and selves in Integrated and transformative ways." (IET, 2017, p.5)

In summary, the NMC Horizon reports (https://www.nmc.org/nmc-horizon/) and IET Innovating Pedagogy reports (https://iet.open.ac.uk/innovating-pedagogy) provide a concise overview of prevalent challenges, trends and innovations for learning and teaching, illustrating emergent challenges faced by educators, students and those supporting learning across themes such as future skills and literacies, new technologies and approaches for learning in an increasingly digitally-focused, online and technology enhanced learning context.

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A Critical Commentary on Information Literacies

Dr Paul Catherall

It can be seen that a growing narrative or advocacy surrounding literacies or competencies has developed over recent years (Jones and Flannigan, 2006, p.6). It may be useful to outline a comparison of some key 'literacies' which have emerged, such as 'Digital Literacy' - which seeks to define a pluralistic or broad range of learning strategies in relation to learning technologies (Knobel, 2008, p.1), 'ICT (Information and Communications Technology) literacy' - which typically defines "generic skills" related to the use of computers and related technologies (Oliver and Towers, 2000, p.381) and 'Information literacy' – which typically defines wider learning approaches for the management, processing and critical use of information derived from a range of media sources (Bent and Stubbings, 2011, p.2).

Digital Literacy has been defined as a "plurality" of information skills and competencies comprising a range of related literacies, "recognizing the advantages of understanding digital literacy as digital literacies." (Knobel, 2008, p.1). This 'literacy' has also been defined in terms of an "assortment of cognitive-thinking strategies" relating to "digital information"(Jones and Flannigan, 2006, p.6) and in terms of wider personal skills and competences, including "…cognitive, motor, sociological, and emotional skills, which users need in order to function effectively in digital environments." (Eshet-Alkalai, 2004, p.93). Further

'literacies' or competencies cited in relation to 'digital literacy' include skills for the interpretation of graphical interfaces, "to 'read' instructions from graphic interfaces ('photo-visual literacy')…" (Jones and Flannigan, 2006, p.6), to reproduce or transfer content or data between diverse interfaces or systems, "…in order to form genuine-creative products ('reproduction literacy')…" (Jones and Flannigan, 2006, p.6), to "construct knowledge" from non-linear, "hypertextual" Web-based sources, "…through knowledge domains ('lateral literacy')…" (Jones and Flannigan, 2006, p.6), to evaluate and assess "digital information ('information literacy')." (Jones and Flannigan, 2006, p.6), and literacy focused around diverse media formats, i.e. "New Media literacy… …to access, analyze, evaluate and create information in a variety of media formats including print and non-print." (Jones and Flannigan, 2006, p.6).

Digital literacy is also defined in terms of collaboration and group-working for student peers, including development of shared, "constructed" knowledge, "…to coordinate with others to create something truly original that neither mind would fathom independently." (Alexander et al., 2017, p.2). Definitions of "digital literacy" often cite considerations for critical, reflective and interpretive management of data (Jones and Flannigan, 2006), stressing that this "pluralistic" definition does not simply define information acquisition and "operational" practices, but comprises a range of conceptual practices for engagement with information technologies "…we might distinguish conceptual definitions of 'digital literacy' from "standadized operational" definitions…" (Knobel, 2008, p.2).

Critical perspectives on digital literacy focus on an emphasis for delivery or access to content, suggesting that students should subject systems and media accessed to critical reflection, Buckingham comments that "we cannot regard them simply as neutral means of delivering information, and we should not use them in a merely functional or instrumental way." (Buckingham, 2006, p.263); similarly, Buckingham comments on an emphasis toward "technical know-how that is relatively easy to acquire" in

contrast to development of "cultural" awareness for uses of technologies (Buckingham, 2006, p.266). Buckingham also comments o the need to recognise bias inherent in the "symbolic or persuasive aspects of digital media", this view is echoed by Fabos (2004, p.95), "...students need to understand how political, economic, and social context shapes all texts."

The digital literacy definition has also drawn criticism in relation to the authority or reliability of systems encountered by students, suggesting that students also require skills preparing them for the use of online information sources, given the "credible" appearance of some Web based resources, Buckingham comments that "high-end design features and institutional origins lend them an air of credibility." (Buckingham, 2006, p.267). Alexander et al. (2017, p.21) similarly comments on the need to avoid assigning inherent skills to students in approaching Web based systems, data and sources, suggesting that students "...do not necessarily have the same level of capabilities. Some need to be taught to use online tools (such as how to navigate a LMS) for learning." (Alexander et al., 2017, p.20).

Alexander et al. (2017, pp.20-21) further comments on assumptions relating to equalities in the acquisition of 'digital literacies', suggesting that many barriers may exist inherently in society for certain demographics, such as older people or women in some cultural contents, commenting "...where basic digital access is difficult, individuals will not be able to prioritize developing their digital identity or pursuing their life goals through digital means..." (Alexander et al., 2017, p.20). These barriers may extend to "race and class, reproducing social inequality." (Alexander et al., 2017, p.20), to regional problems in terms of network infrastructure, to socio-economic factors for demographic groups, such as women, commenting that for "...women living in cultures where there is a lot of gender disparity... ...girls are actively prevented from using computers..." (Alexander et al., 2017, p.21). The international context is

also cited in terms of Internet Control, surveillance and the threat of sanctions for some world regions, suggesting that "...the sociopolitical environment makes it difficult for them to actually apply this expertise without substantial personal risk..." (Alexander et al., 2017, p.21).

In contrast to digital literacy, ICT literacy is most typically defined in context to core skills for use of computer equipment and related technologies, Oliver and Towers comment "…the need for a basic set of computing skills and understandings has returned to the agenda with the growth of interest in generic skills and in the use of ICT as instructional media and information sources…" (Oliver and Towers, 2000, p.381). This definition is echoed by Vlieghe (2017, p.401), suggesting that "…the most common approach in favour of ICT literacy, often shared by policy-makers, is to regard it as a practical skill." (Vlieghe, 2017, p.401), however, a broader definition is proposed by Katz and Macklin (2007, p.50), suggesting ICT literacy allows for "...researching and communicating information via digital environments..." and by Oliver and Towers (2000, p.384) as a "measure of the student's capacity to make appropriate use of ICT for educational and learning purposes. Studies and outcomes". ICT literacy is also defined by O'Connor et al. (2002, p.16) in terms of the ability to "access, manage, integrate, evaluate and create information in order to function in a knowledge society."

The range of skills cited in relation to ICT literacy includes "...a range of communication tools such as e-mail, video-conferencing and the World Wide Web (WWW) for the location of information, and the subsequent dissemination of information…" (Oliver and Towers, 2000, p.382). ICT literacy is also cited as a successor to older 'literacies' such as "computer literacy" (Oliver and Towers, 2000, p.382). ICT literacy is cited in terms of globally relevant, economic and employment related skills, to the 'knowledge economy' or 'knowledge society' (Sianou-Kyrgiou, and Tsiplakides, 2012, p.55), where acquisition or exploitation of information

has become the new economic imperative, "...characterized by unprecedented global flows in information, products, people, capital, and ideas." (O'Connor, B. et al., 2002, p.16). ICT Literacy is also cited as closely linked to core computing software equipment and applications including basic use of a personal computer, wordprocessors, email, Web browsers, presentation software and other Web based applications (Oliver and Towers, 2000, p.384).

Critical perspectives on ICT literacy include debate on the causal impact of ICT education on economic, societal and educational development (Katz and Macklin, 2007, p.50), suggesting that considerable funding has been challenged into ICT skills development without reference to wider competencies beyond the use of applications or computer platforms (Vlieghe, 2017, pp.403; Sianou-Kyrgiou and Tsiplakides, 2012, p.56; Riis, 2015, p.386).

Katz and Macklin (2007, p.50) comment that "...discussions of Information Technology in Education typically emphasize the Technology rather than the Information." (Katz and Macklin, 2007, p.50). Vlieghe (2017, p.401) comments that a proliferation of ICT training across educational and economic sectors carries risks such as failing to ensure development of wider competencies such as critical and reflective skills for managing information, suggesting that "using ICT inevitably implies two risks, viz. the inherent temptation of regarding ICT as an end-in-itself, and the risk to get fast and easily distracted." Katz and Macklin (2007) similarly suggest that a focus on ICT literacy can lead to complacency for learners, who "believe themselves to be competent users of information resources... ...This can lead to disinterest in learning skills..." (Katz and Macklin, 2007, p.50).

Riis (2015) further suggests that the wide advocacy and implementation of ICT literacy related training has occurred in the absence of reflection on ethical impact of these technologies and how they can be used or

misused, commenting that the "entanglement of ethics and technology makes it necessary for us to understand and reflect upon our own practices and to question technological hypes." (Riis, 2015, p.385). Riis (2015) and Vlieghe (2017), point out that the resort to ICT skills development has been erroneously seen as a solution to any problem or challenge for education, society or industry, Vlieghe comments that "...the penchant to immediately define any problem that shows up as a call for more and better use of ICT technology, leaving aside the question whether or not we really need to rely on (so much of) these technologies in the first place." (Vlieghe, 2017, pp.401-402).

For Vlieghe , the issue of distraction in an education setting, referring to the rise of social media, personal mobile devices and use of Web based applications has been addressed via similar ICT solutions, potentially avoiding or deflecting from more fundamental questions on the rise and advocacy for ICT related technologies and ICT literacy, commenting that "...it has become almost natural to look for solutions at the level of the technology we use (e.g. developing a program that makes it impossible to switch between windows or apps)." (Vlieghe, 2017, pp.402).

Riis (2015) comments on a more fundamental question for ICT literacy, in terms of a convergence between the formal and informal setting for access to these technologies, suggesting that it is necessary to understand ICT literacy from this converged perspective, suggesting that "...the practical gap between the different spheres of our live narrows (i.e. between work, hobby, entertainment and socializing)..." (Riis, 2015, p.386).

Similarly, Vlieghe comments on the need to address the shifting nature of what 'literacy' now represents, describing new literacies such as ICT literacy as the "formation of entirely new and unforeseeable forms of subjectivity... ...this would also imply a profound shift in what it means to become an educated person." (Vlieghe, 2017, pp.403), the "socioeconomic background" of ICT literacy is similarly outlined by

Sianou-Kyrgiou, and Tsiplakides (2012) in terms of a need to understand this literacy in a critical and reflective manner, rather than acceptance of literacies inherent in these technologies, Vlieghe (2017, p.403) comments that what "...is at stake is thus becoming conscious of conditions that escape our attention by taking a position outside of these conditions." (Vlieghe, 2017, pp.403), also suggesting an analogy between ICT literacy and the grammatical forms of written literacy, describing this as "…a grammatization of digital literacy in a most technical sense of this word: a bodily ingrained, practiced knowledge of what it means… ...which also allows for a critical attitude vis- à-vis ICT." (Vlieghe, 2017, pp.404). Another critical perspective for ICT literacy refers to economic, social and other disparities for equalities inherent in societies, Sianou-Kyrgiou, and Tsiplakides (2012) echoing Alexander et al. (2017) point out the potential barriers for development of ICT literacy, for individuals lacking socioeconomic capacity to access ICT skills or technologies, to this extent, the imperative for ICT literacy may increase inequalities within society, commenting that "...differential uses are also likely to contribute to social inequality, since the effective exploitation of the Internet is related to a person's socioeconomic status… ICT may exacerbate existing social inequalities…" (Sianou-Kyrgiou, and Tsiplakides, 2012, p.57).

Information literacy, is typically defined as a specific range of skills for critical reflection, evaluation, effective use and management of information sources (Bruce, 2004, Johnston and Webber, 2003, Bent and Stubbings, 2011). Writing in a SCONUL (UK Society of College, National and University Libraries) paper outlining "The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy", (Bent and Stubbings, 2011, p.2) suggest that information literacy is "evidenced through understanding the ways in which information and data is created and handled, learning skills in its management and use and modifying learning attitudes, habits and behaviours to appreciate the role of information literacy in learning." (Bent and Stubbings, 2011, p.2).

Bruce comments on the role of information literacy in terms of critical, information management skills as a core skills for engagement with digital and online technologies, for negotiating diverse information types and media and using or assimilating sources effectively, Bruce comments that "IL is inextricably associated with information practices and critical thinking in the information and communication technology (ICT) environment." (Bruce, 2004, p.1).

Parker (2003) also suggests that information literacy further comprises skills for understanding when information sources should be interrogated and how different sources should be used, suggesting information literacy is "the ability to recognise when information is needed, then to be able to locate and evaluate the appropriate information and use it effectively..." (Parker, 2003, p.223), this perspective is echoed by Johnston and Webber (2003, p.337), suggesting that information literacy refers to strategic use of digital or online information sources, using advanced retrieval skills in contrast to generic "searching", commenting that "...the emphasis on recognising an information need, evaluating what is found, and using the information effectively." (Johnston and Webber, 2003, p.337). The SCONUL 'Seven Pillars of Information Literacy' published in 2011 have provided advocacy in this area for tertiary education in the UK, suggesting a range of 'pillars' or key areas for student development, these pillars can be used selectively as required to match education requirements; Bent and Stubbings (2011, p.2) comment that "...expectations of levels reached on each pillar may be different in different contexts and for different ages and levels of learner and is also dependent on experience and information need." (Bent and Stubbings, 2011, p.3). The pillars are described as "a series of statements relating to a set of skills/competencies and a set of attitudes/understandings..." (Bent and Stubbings, 2011, p.4).

The SCONUL model for information literacy includes a number of "Pillars" which comprise a narrative or explanation for skills and competencies. In the "identify" pillar, this is described as ability to "identify a personal need for information..." and developing synergy between learning skills and information currency "...so new information is being actively sought all the time." (Bent and Stubbings, 2011, p.5). The "Scope" pillar describes the ability to assess the characteristics of information and to define bias inherent in media, i.e. the "characteristics of the different types of information source available to them and how they may be affected by the format (digital, print)...", also in context to addressing "current knowledge" and "gaps" in the student's own knowledge (Bent and Stubbings, 2011, p.6).

The "Plan" pillar describes skills for developing information approaches designed for specific projects or tasks, i.e. to "construct strategies for locating information and data " for the identification of "new tools" which may enhance information retrieval and to ensure addressing a range of sources, including new, unfamiliar sources Bent and Stubbings, 2011, p.7). The "Gather" pillar describes skills related to information retrieval, including use of "collaborative tools" for shared access to data, also for ensuring awareness of new technologies to "access the information and data they need" (Bent and Stubbings, 2011, p.8). The "Evaluate" pillar describes skills for review, comparison and evaluation of data and information, including consideration for "quality, accuracy, relevance, bias, reputation and credibility relating to information and data sources." (Bent and Stubbings, 2011, p.9).   The "Manage" pillar comprises skills for the management and organisation of information, also to ensure information is managed "professionally and ethically", and for consideration of effective means of "storing and sharing information and data ethically." (Bent and Stubbings, 2011, p.10). The "Present" pillar concerns skills for applying information sources obtained, synthesising information and presenting research "to create new knowledge...

...disseminating it in a variety of ways." (Bent and Stubbings, 2011, p.11).

Critical perspectives on information literacy have therefore focused on the prevalent narrative of information literacy within the domain of libraries and librarians, suggesting that this perspective may present some degree of bias or lack of consideration for wider or more holistic perspectives of learning, Johnston and Webber (2003) have commented that "...information literacy initiatives have tended to be led by librarians, whose work may not be integrated into credit-bearing classes... ...the results are still relatively narrow, giving a potentially superficial guide to the nature of a curriculum for information literacy in higher education." (Johnston and Webber, 2003, p.339).

Further perspectives on information literacy have suggested an over-emphasis on technologies and information retrieval, suggesting that the narrative of information literacy focuses too heavily on skills for use of Web based information sources and electronic databases in contrast to wider, non-digital, print and archival sources: "...these solutions tend to overemphasise use of IT, and in particular use of the Internet, equating information with electronic information." (Johnston and Webber, 2003, p.340). Similarly, Johnston and Webber (2003) comments on the potentially limited scope for developing educational skills which has been inherent in this emphasis on the Internet and digital sources, suggesting that information literacy should re-focus toward an emphasis on critical and reflective practice across a more holistic range of media, commenting that " ...although there are efforts to make good quality information sources accessible to faculty and students... ...making people information literate is not simply a matter of providing them with better organised virtual libraries." (Johnston and Webber, 2003, p.340).

It can therefore be shown that ICT literacy, digital literacy and information literacy have emerged as key 'literacies' and sources of advocacy within the tertiary and Higher Education sectors.

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Information for Social Change Number 37 Summer/Autumn 2018

Using WordPress

Dr Paul Catherall

Over recent years I have used the WordPress application to manage a number of Web sites. Previously this process would have involved hand-crafted HTML design and development, comprising activities such as managing diverse, separate Web applications and configuration of complex scripts, often requiring high-end IT skills, programming or server management skills. In the current context, WordPress has allowed for the relatively easier management of Web sites, incorporating a range of Web features and applications which previously would have relied on traditional Web development skills.

Some recent WordPress sites I have maintained recently include the University College Union (UCU) branch Web site for University of Liverpool http://ulivuvunews.org.uk and the site of this journal and collective, Information for Social Change (ISC) http://libr.org.isc

WordPress was released in 2003 and has since provided a highly user-friendly application for the management of Web content, focused around the function of blogging (Web logging) to create or post information.

Perhaps the most important concept within WordPress is the management of short, bulletin-type content known as 'posts', these are intended to represent news items, for authoring and display in a sequential, dated

format. In a standard WordPress installation, posts will usually display on the homepage, however it is possible to refine the WordPress site to display specific kind (or 'categories') of post under particular navigation headings.

Conversely, it is also possible to create 'pages', unlike posts, these are intended to correlate with top level navigation headings and to remain static, reflecting the static HTML pages in a traditional Web site:
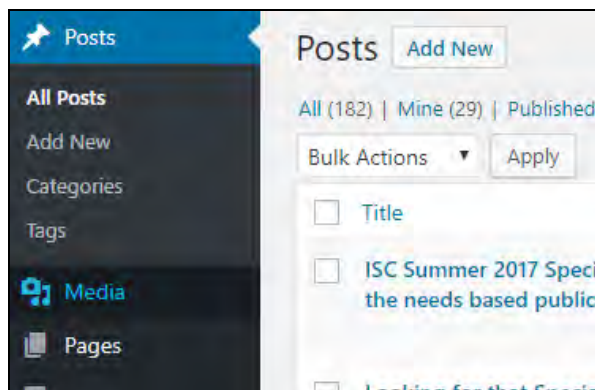

Figure 1 – the management of posts in WordPress.

WordPress posts are organised around 'tags' and 'categories'. These features within the WordPress sites are key to the success of the WordPress platform, allowing for content to be posted and associated with defined 'categories' for high level organisation and navigation for the end user:
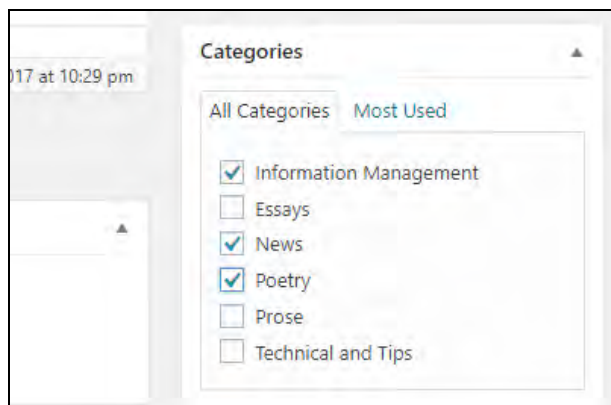
Figure 2 – the management of categories in WordPress.

Tags are similar to 'categories' but do not rely on defined values and can be supplied ad-hoc within specific 'posts', allowing for a further, less hierarchical, more fluid organisation and browsing of content depending on the precise coverage of that content item.
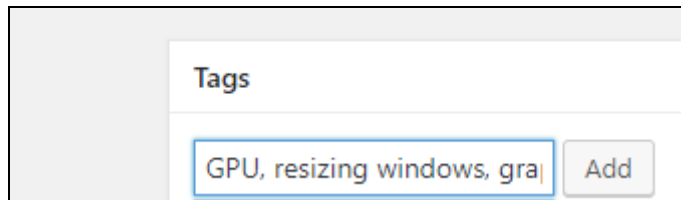

Figure 3 – adding tags.

We can see the use of categories for the grouping of specific blog posts, in the example below; we can see all posts which have been categorised under 'Dispute News' are appearing under the top-level navigation link representing this category:
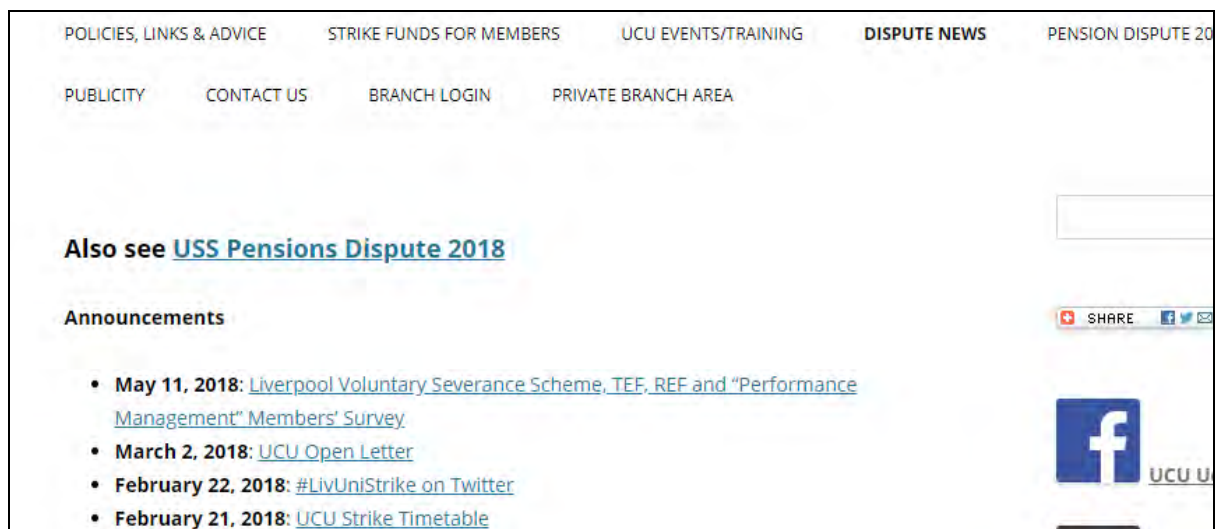

Figure 4 – displaying categoried posts on a page.

The tagging feature is intended to provide an additional level for management of posts, allowing for multiple taxonomies to be applied for additional end-user navigation, in most WordPress sites this is used to provide a tag list or tag cloud, allowing for an overview of topics associated with posts for rapid navigation.
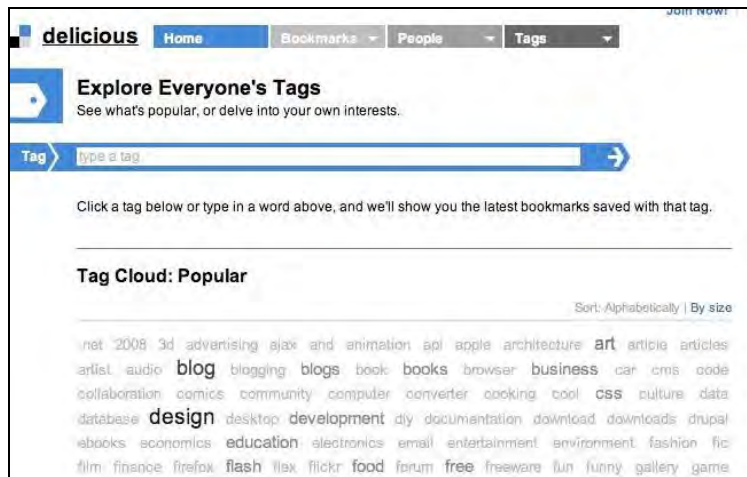
Figure 5 – example tag cloud.

WordPress' display or layout is largely controlled by the 'Appearance' area. Perhaps the most important aspect of this feature is the 'Widgets' area, allowing you to control what aspects of the blog are displayed in specific areas of the interface, this can be achieved using a relatively simple drag and drop approach, although for more flexibility you may need to choose a different 'theme' – providing a structure, layout, colours, logos etc. Advanced changes to the layout will require Web editing skills, modification of an existing 'theme' or creation of a new theme:
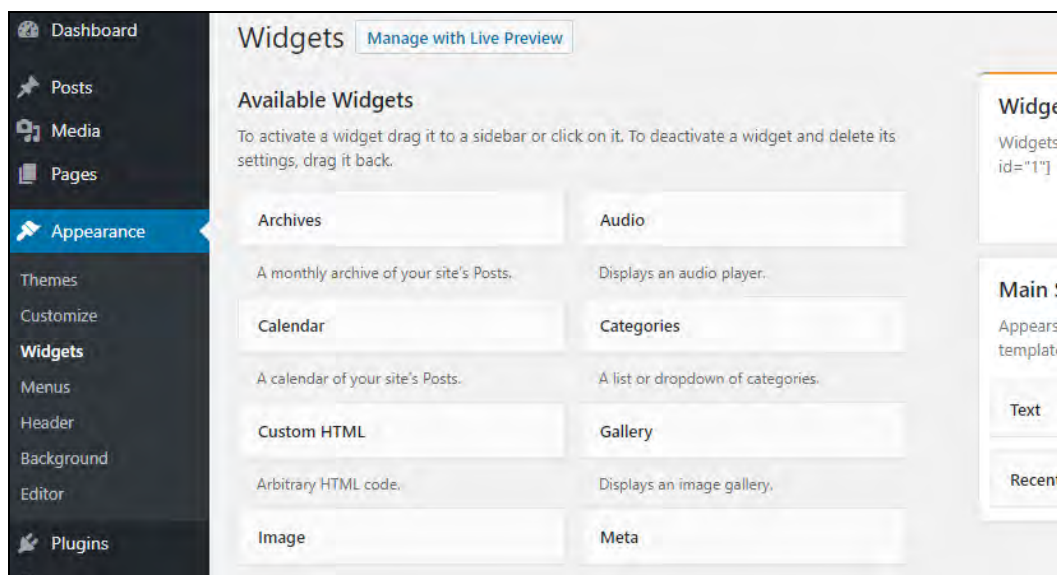

Figure 6 – managing widgets in the 'Appearance' area.

Perhaps the most powerful feature of WordPress is the ability to manage plugins to extend the functionality of the site, new plugins can be obtained and managed via the 'Plugins' area in WordPress:
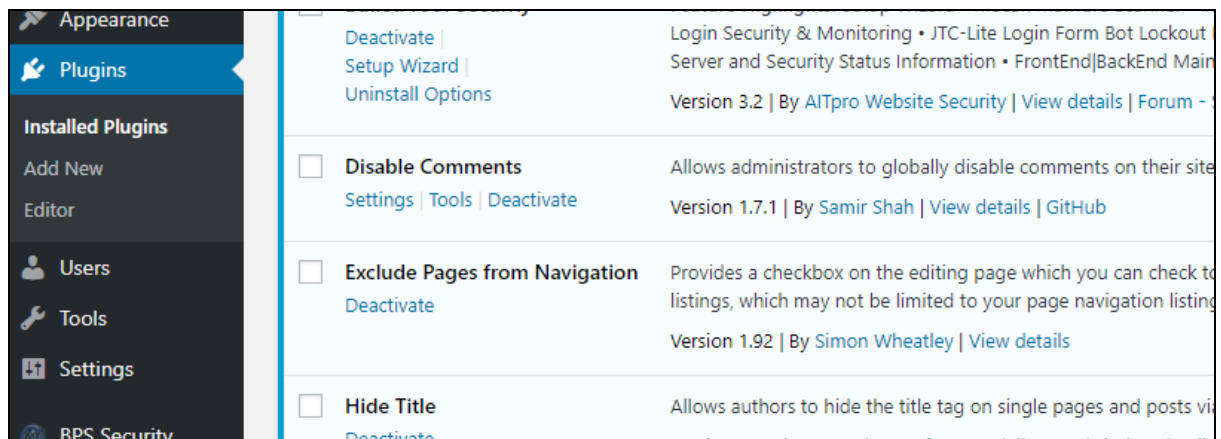

Figure 7 – managing plugins in WordPress.

Some useful plugins I often use on WordPress sites to extend or enhance functionality include:

- BulletProof Security - Provides a free suite of tools to reduce the threat of intrusion, hacking and related problems.
- Disable Comments - This may be useful for a site where commenting is not required.
- Exclude Pages from Navigation - When you create a page this will appear in the top-level navigation, this will hide the link to the page.
- Simple Page Ordering - Allows for re-ordering pages, affecting the order of top-level navigation menu items.
- Simple post listing - Allows you to force the listing of posts matching your criteria (tags/categories) on specific pages.
- Speedy Page Redirect - Allowing for URL redirects.
- Widgets On Pages - Proving the ability to show specific widgets (from the 'Appearance' area) on specific pages.

- WP Clone by WP Academy - A plugin for backing up and restoration of a WordPress site.

In summary, WordPress provides powerful features for the provision of news content and also for traditional Web content based around static pages, or for provision of sites containing both these kinds of content. The provision of plugins, often authored by third parties (but quality assured via the WordPress plugin repository) provide a wide range of added functionality including educational, commercial and data management functions, for example, allowing the use of WordPress as a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), as a client management or sales platform or as a community Web site and forum.

Finally, one consideration for WordPress will be to decide on either independent hosting or WordPress-based hosting, the former entails installing and managing your own WordPress site on a traditional Web host/server, this can be more cost effective if you can find a reasonably priced Web host (you should check the Web host is willing to allow installation of WordPress), this option is also more accessible than in the past due to systems such as *Installatron* and *CPanel* (Web hosting applications often provided by Web hosting companies), allowing for fairly quick set-up of a WordPress site on your own Web host.
The second hosting option involves use of WordPress' official hosting provision (http://wordpress.com) which offers a range of functionality such as plugin support for a range of pricing tiers, this can offer a more supported, less complex way to host a WordPress site but can represent less direct control over the site and its management and may be more costly than an independently hosted option.

Overall, the use of WordPress represents a significantly more usable, less demanding option for providing a Web site or news blog. Consideration should also be given for issues such as Web security and content backup.

Plugins such as the examples mentioned above can be useful to reduce the threat of malware, security breaches or similar problems.
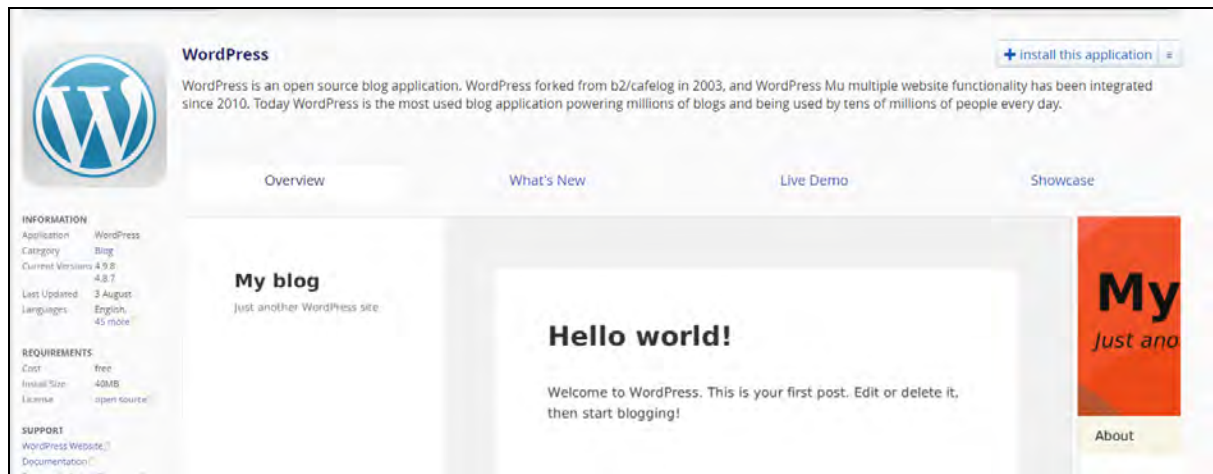

Figure 8 – a typical default WordPress layout after initial installation.

Information for Social Change Number 37
Summer/Autumn 2018

Nikolaus [Niki] Hamann Obituary

Martyn Lowe

It was great sadness that we have just learnt about the death of Niki Harmann.

Niki was for many years a key activist within KRIBIBI [Working Group of Critical Librarians in Austria].

He campaigned upon many aspects of library provision in Austria.

It was through his work that the first library school was established in the country.

Niki was also involved in organising the second Progressive Librarians Around the World conference, which was held in Vienna during 2000.

His enthusiasm for the better provision of libraries shone through and was an inspiration to all of us who ever had the pleasure of meeting him.

Nikolaus [Niki] Hamann
December 2nd 1953 - June 29th 2018

KRIBIBI
https://www.kribibi.at

Information for Social Change Number 37
Summer/Autumn 2018

Like - Dislike. What's the best and the worst part about working in a Public Libraries?

Like - Dislike

What's the best and the worst part about working in a Public Libraries?
We asked J who is a Library Worker.

Like
1. Polite public.
2. Helping People.
3. Shiny new books.
4. Like Colleagues.
5. Varied.

Dislike.
1. Rude public.
2. Computers going wrong.
3. Books piled up on shelves.
4. Not enough staff.
5. Working late.

Information for Social Change Number 37 Summer/Autumn 2018

Selected Poems by Paul Catherall 2017

Dr Paul Catherall

These are previously unpublished poems completed in 2017, exploring issues of migration in the current context of debate on this topic, the inheritance of the past, reflections on the poet, visionary and illustrator William Blake and a personal comment on the US poet Joe Blondo.

To Joe Blondo

Joe, we met in a place marked

by spirits of a different age,

by graceful hand or art

inscribed or burned into our memories.

You were seeking, I had barely sought,

but you were merely rearranging thoughts.

The differences were plain, but still -

you offered quiet restraint

and spectacle that I had striven to see.

I go back sometimes to that place,

you talk hitch-hiking, trailers and the draft -

reminding that reality is gold.

The Marriage of Heaven and Hell

Rintrah, stumbling and frail -
wayward pilgrim over paven streets –
a panoply of moulded steel,
born from the anvil of a senseless hand.
His lips cracked, speech drowned
in voiceless cacophony of growl and hiss -
of brazen servitors about their daily grind.
Now cold before a charming edifice -
the servitors expunge his scattered rags,
sanitary and expedient.
Only now we dimly recollect -
Rintrah roar and raging in the deep.

Blake's graveside

A simple marker in a graveyard pitch -
little to recall the visionary chant
or ageless hymns penned to the swallow's song.

Excavation

We dug for hours beneath the wild grass -
swaying a little and beckoning,
craving the detritus of others' lives -
a marrow bone, a rusted spoon or shattered clay,
the jigsaw fragments of an antique jar.
I glimpse grey shadows, robed in old attire,
their careworn items used, then thrown aside -
as like one place, one time, we share with them.

Changes 2

As change falls blindly on our inward path,

we quickly clear the detritus of lives

both past and longed for -

draining like a boil the corpuscles and blood

until a white and blinding scar remains,

a sanctuary to the wailing storm beyond.

The Pilgrim

What thoughts could lead so far from home and warmth,

across uncharted and insipient seas -

to sow a sterile seed in unknown earth,

resisted by the shattered stone and clay.

Religion offered as a gift in hope,

yet often unrequited, war also

would be your fellow on the path ahead.

Tell us how to sow, to strive anew -

in our time, marked by new adversaries.

The Last of England

With every mile, yet ever motionless

like the boat's keel, seemingly inert,

they saw the distant shore become a speck.

Memories became as whispered tales,

a miscellany of idyll, loss and woe -

and futures bright ahead yet realised.